

BEWARE OF PROMISE KEEPERS

July 10, 1997 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

Promise Keepers was founded in 1990 by University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney. Its stated goal is to target men of ALL DENOMINATIONS and ethnic groups who desire to promote personal integrity and moral accountability. The response has been phenomenal. Some 50,000 men attended a Promise Keepers rally last summer in Boulder, Colorado. Meetings are scheduled in six U.S. cities in 1994, and 120,000 to 180,000 men are expected to attend.

In conjunction with the growth of this movement a new magazine is being published entitled New Man: For Men of Integrity. The premier issue has a press run of 200,000. The publisher selected to produce the periodical is Strang Communication, publisher of the radically charismatic/ecumenical Charisma magazine.

While we praise the Lord for any man who sincerely repents of his sin and dedicates his life to Jesus Christ, we are afraid of Promise Keepers. It will do more to build the harlot church of Revelation 17 than it will to build New Testament churches. The men who are reached through this ministry will not be brought into sound New Testament Baptist churches and grounded in the truth. They will not be taught to keep themselves pure from apostasy and heresy. They will not be trained in discerning false gospels from the true. Rather they will be instructed in unscriptural ecumenism; they will be taught that doctrine is not crucial, that to fight for the truth is unspiritual. They will be encouraged to accept even apostate denominations as genuine expressions of Christianity. We know this is true because of the leaders involved in promoting Promise Keepers. Few men are more radically ecumenical than James Dobson and Stephen Strang. Both accept Roman Catholicism as genuine Christianity. Further, Promise Keeper founder Bill McCartney "is a member of a John Wimber 'signs and wonders' Vineyard Christian Fellowship church" (Calvary Contender, June 1, 1994).

Those who get involved with Promise Keepers will also be trained in a blasphemous mixture of humanistic psychology and corrupt Christianity. The presence of psychologist James Dobson within this movement guarantees this. The men attending the massive Promise Keepers conference last summer were given complimentary copies of The Masculine Journey: Understanding the Six Stages of Manhood by psychotherapist Robert Hicks. In a review of this book, T.A. McMahon notes:

"The book, written to help 'provide directions for a man's life so that he doesn't get lost along the way,' is mainly psychologically biased conjecture centering around six Hebrew words. In chapter after chapter, subjective insights into manhood are offered through quotes by a host of secular authors with a psychological bent, including Carl Jung, inner-healing therapist Leanne Payne, transpersonal psychiatrist/spiritualist Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, and Sam Keen, former

theologian in residence at Esalen, the New Age/Eastern mystical therapeutic center south of San Francisco. Keen's books feature vicious diatribes against biblical Christianity.

"The author of *The Masculine Journey*, who is also a pastor and seminary professor of pastoral theology, demonstrates what a perverting influence a psychospiritual bias can have. Consider the following small sampling of quotes (his and others) related to just two of man's alleged stages:

"The phallic stage: 'Possessing a [male sexual part] places unique requirements upon men before God in how they are to worship Him. We are called to worship God as phallic kinds of guys, not as some sort of androgynous, neutered nonmales, or the feminized males so popular in many feminist-enlightened churches.' 'I believe Jesus was phallic with all the inherent phallic passions we experience as men.'

"This seems to be either the result of Freudian brainwashing or hanging out in locker rooms. Either way, it's blasphemous.

"Regarding man's (emotionally) wounded stage: 'In order for men to discover what manhood is all about, they must descend into the deep places of their own souls and find their accumulated grief.' 'I am convinced many men in our society today are lashing out at women, at society, at bosses, even at God--all because they do not understand the wounding experience.' 'The story of Jacob ... illustrates a young man having been severely wounded by a dysfunctional family system.'

"You have to be totally indoctrinated by inner-healing psychobabble to derive even a jot of such nonsense from the Bible.

"There are just too many biblically erroneous teachings in Hick's book to cover here. Most involve his interpretations based upon psychology. Where do you find male and female categories of emotional woundedness? or anatomically related worship? Where do you find understanding manhood as a key to a godly life? You don't if you simply take Scripture at its word: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28)."

That this type of psychobabble will permeate Promise Keepers is seen in the fact that those who attended last summer's conference were encouraged to purchase the study guide for Hick's book and to form *The Masculine Journey* study groups.

We conclude with the warning given by McMahon: "Dr. James Dobson, on a recent radio broadcast, held out great hope that Promise Keepers would stir the coals of revival among men in this country. That is indeed a worthwhile hope, but it grieves us deeply to see that the sparks of truth are being fanned into false flames by the winds of psychospirituality. The unbiblical preoccupation of this Christian men's movement is with man himself and from man's

perspective. It can only truly live up to Coach McCartney's exhortation to contend for the faith by getting back to the basics of the faith. The emphasis has to be focusing on God Himself, getting to know Him and His way through His Word. If not, it is at best doomed to a grace-barren, fleshly form of godliness."